



Here taketh the makere of this book his leve.

NOW preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretys or rede, that if ther be any-thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken oure Lord Ihesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. And if ther be anythyng that displesse hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defeaute of myn unkonnynge, and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konnyng. for oure boke seith: Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. Wherefore I biseke yow mekely, for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me & foryeve me my giltes: and namely, of my translaciouns and enditynges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns: as is The book of Troylus; The book also of fame; The book of the Nynetene Ladies; The book of the Duchesse; The book of Saint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; The Tales of Caunterbury, thilke that

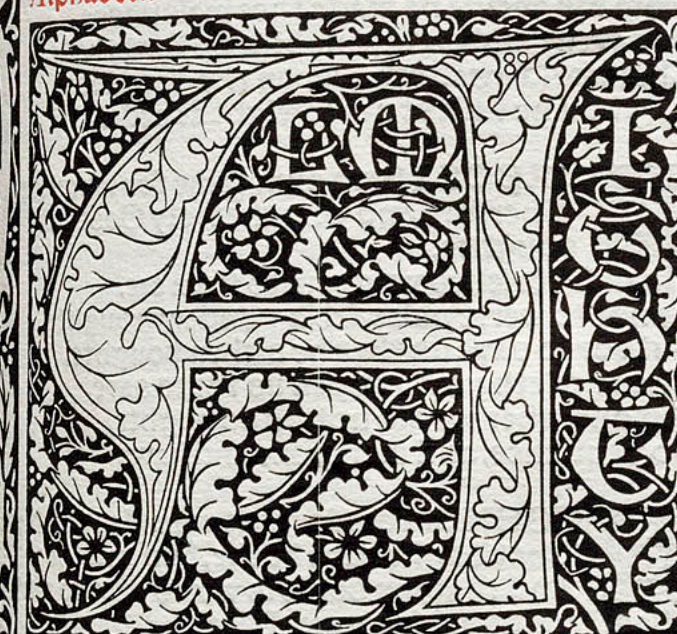
sownen into synne; The book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song, and many a lecherous lay; that Crist, for his grette mercy, foryeve me the synne. But of the translacioun of Boece de Consolacione, & othere bookes of Legendes of Seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, & devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Ihesu Crist and his blisful mooder, & alle the seintes of hevne; bisekyng hem that they from hennesforth, unto my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes, & to studie to the salvacioun of my soule: and graunte me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to doon in this present lyf; thurgh the benigne grace of hym that is kyng of kynges, and preest over alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte; so that I may been oon of hem at the day of doom that shulle be saved. Quicum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.

Here is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geoffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Ihesu Crist have mercy. Amen.



AN A.B.C. OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Incipit carmen secundum ordinem literarum Alphabeti.



AND AL MERCIABLE QUENE,
To whom that al this world fleeth for
socour,
To have relees of sinne, sorwe and tene,
Glorious virgine, of alle floures flour,

To thee I flee, confounded in errour!
Help and releve, thou mighty debonaire,
Have mercy on my perilous langour!
Venquissed me hath my cruel adversaire.

BOUNTEE so fix hath in thyn herte
his tente,
That wel I wot thou wolt my
socour be,
Thou canst not warne him that, with good
entente,
Axeth thyn help. Thyn herte is ay so free,
Thou art largesse of pleyn felicittee,
Haven of refut, of quiete and of reste.
Lo, how that theves seven chasen me!
Help, lady bright, er that my ship to-breste!

COMFORT is noon, but in yow, lady
dere,
For lo, my sinne and my confusioun,
Which oughten not in thy presence appere,
Han take on me a grevous accioun
Of verrey right and desperacioun;
And, as by right, they mighten wel sustene
That I were worthy my dampnacioun,
Nere mercy of you, blisful hevne quene.